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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of three presentational modes--transcription, audiotape, and videotape--on raters' evaluations of male and female speakers using a powerless, powerful, or mixed speech style. A powerless speech style was characterized by the use of message elements such as qualifiers, tag questions, polite forms, and disclaimers. A powerful style was characterized by the absence of these message elements, while a mixed style represented a mode halfway between the others. Subjects, 116 female and 81 male undergraduates at a small southeastern university, rated a male or female manager (actors) presenting powerless, powerful, and mixed versions of a message on one of the three presentational modes. A contrived situation depicted a manager talking on the phone to a subordinate who has called about a work problem. The script contained only the manager's portion of the conversation so that the raters would focus solely on the manager's speech style. Both the male and female actors were videotaped encoding all three speech style scripts, and raters were presented with either the male or female version of the speech styles on one of the three delivery modes. Results indicated that respondents rated the mixed speech style most effective for all presentational modes. The powerless speech style was judged next most effective, while the powerful style was rated least effective. (Tables of data are included, and references are appended.) (NKA)

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STUDYING COMMUNICATION STYLE:

COMPARISON OF THREE METHODS FOR GATHERING DATA

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Through a variety of subtle verbal and nonverbal cues we signal our social power to others. Nonverbally, we indicate our power or powerlessness through our eye contact, facial expression, voice, touch, space, dress, and the like. Verbally, we leak status cues through our dialect, accent, pronunciation, language diversity, or other similar speech qualities (Bradac, Konsky, & Davies, 1976).

The power cue of interest in this investigation is speech style. Only recently has speech style been empirically examined to determine how it varies with a person's social power. O'Barr and his associates (1982) examined language in the courtroom and identified several linguistic features that characterize persons with high versus low social power vis a vis the courtroom context. Persons with high social power in the courtroom (such as lawyers and expert witnesses) tended to use few hedges, hesitations, intensifiers, tag questions, deictic phrases, and polite forms. Brevity and fluency characterized their speech style. On the other hand, persons with low social power in relation to the court (such as uneducated witnesses and defendants) tended to speak in longer, less fluent sentences. These persons used a high number of hedges, hesitations, and the other speech forms mentioned above. Additionally, Bradac, Hemphill, & Tardy (1981) found listeners perceive speakers who use high levels of hesitations, hedges, tag questions, and the like, to be powerless. These speakers are also judged low in attractiveness and competency (Bradac, Hemphill, & Tardy, 1981;

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O'Barr, 1982).

Concurrent with research examining differences in powerful and powerless speech styles, gender communication researchers have identified similar differences in stereotypical masculine versus stereotypical feminine speech styles. Women appear to use more intensifiers, hedges, fillers, and qualifiers than do men (Key, 1972; Lakoff, 1975; McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, & Gale, 1977; Crosby & Nyquist, 1977; Hirschman, 1975). Women also use more compound requests, tag questions and questioning (Thorne & Henley, 1975; West & Zimmerman, 1975; Newcombe & Arnkoff, 1979; McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, & Gale, 1977; Fishman, 1978). Consequently, the stereotypical female speech style has been characterized as powerless and the stereotypical male style as powerful (Thorne & Henley, 1975; Lakoff, 1975; Kramerae, 1981).

A connection can be made between the research on speech styles for gender and power. Individuals with low social power and low status vis a vis the communication setting tend to use powerless speech forms and, subsequently, are viewed powerless. Conversely, individuals with relatively high status and power tend to speak in a more straight-forward, powerful style and, thus, are viewed as powerful (Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O'Barr, 1978). The traditional roles of men and women in our society mirrored the behaviors of powerful and powerless styles. Consequently, women's low social power and low status were reflected in their speech style; whereas, men's higher social power and status were evidenced in their speech style (Haas,

1979).

However, as gender roles are changing, so may be gender-typed language. Erickson and her associates' (1978) sociolinguistic investigation revealed that the use of powerful or powerless speech forms is more closely linked to social power than to sex of speaker.

Several studies have manipulated the use of powerful and powerless speech style for males and females in various settings (Wiley & Eskilson, 1985; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O'Barr, 1978; Wright & Hosman, 1983; Warfel, 1984). However, none has manipulated these speech styles for a management setting. Furthermore, the studies investigating powerless and powerful speech forms have treated these speaking attributes as polar extremes. No previous study has examined a possible blend of these dichotomous styles. Therefore, the present investigation additionally examined a third possible speech style - a mixed speech style. The mixed speech style is intended to represent a style midway between the powerful (stereotypical masculine) and the powerless (stereotypical feminine) speech styles, and, thus, possesses aspects of both styles.

In addition to speech style and sex of speaker, the current study included manipulation of a third variable - the mode in which the stimulus message was presented. The studies of powerful and powerless speech style mentioned earlier typically used transcribed messages which subjects read and evaluated. Bradac & Mulac (1984) note that previous studies of powerful and powerless speech styles have consistently obtained

similar outcomes for both written and spoken presentations. For instance, Erickson et al. (1978) found that style effects are not restricted to one mode of presentation nor to one gender of speaker.

Although transcribed messages have the advantage of eliminating "noise" which may be produced by various voice qualities and presentations (Bradac & Mulac, 1984), there is some question as to whether effects can be generalized to spoken language. For instance, Erickson et al. (1978) examined the effects of speech style in transcribed versus audiotaped courtroom testimony. Their results indicated a relationship between sex of speaker (witness) and presentational mode. The female speaker was rated more attractive than the male speaker in the oral presentation; while the male was rated more attractive than the female in the written presentation. Additionally, they found a relationship between speech style, sex of witness, and presentation mode for the powerless style but not for the powerful style. The powerful speech style was rated higher for attractiveness and credibility regardless of the sex of the witness or the presentational mode. However, for the powerless style in the written presentation mode, the male testimony was more accepted than the female testimony. Whereas in the powerless style for the oral presentation mode, the female testimony was more accepted than the male's testimony.

Erickson and her associates conclude from this research that if there is a general stereotypical bias against female communicators, this bias might operate to favor the male speaker

in the written presentation condition where subjects have fewer direct cues. Conversely, the audiotaped presentation condition may provide additional information about the speaker that permits subjects to respond less according to their stereotypes. Erickson and her associates' conclusion corrobates Insko & Schopler's (1972) contention that stereotypes are used most in situations where there is little information about the target.

If subjects are more likely to rely on stereotypes when little information is available about the targets, then by having visual and aural communication cues, subjects should respond less according to stereotypes. Therefore, in order to measure the effects of presentational mode on raters' evaluations of male and female speakers' speech style, the present study utilized three presentational modes for the message: (1) transcribed (2) audiotaped (3) videotaped.

Although no previous study has compared the effects of speech style when presented on these delivery modes, Bradac (1983) notes the importance of communication researchers examining the presentational mode for stimulus messages. Bradac suggests that medium of presentation may have theoretical interest rather than merely being a confounding variable. Whenever delivery mode may be a "source of confounding or a theoretically rich variable", Bradac (p. 185) suggests using multiple delivery modes for a single message rather than unimodal presentations of multiple messages.

Consequently, the research question addressed in this study was: What are the effects of three presentational modes on raters' evaluations of male and female speakers using a powerless,

powerful, or mixed speech style?

METHOD

Respondents

Participants in this study were 116 female and 81 male undergraduates enrolled in basic speech courses at a small Southeastern university. Respondents rated a male or female manager presenting the powerless, powerful, and mixed versions of a message on one of three presentational modes. Respondents evaluated the effectiveness of each communication style on a 5-point Likert-type scale for seven questions.

Power Variable

Power of speech style was operationalized as in previous studies of powerful and powerless speech (Bradac, Hemphill & Tardy, 1981; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O'Barr, 1978). A powerless speech style was characterized by the use of one of the following message elements in each of the speaker's statements:

1. Qualifiers: Phrases such as "kind of," "I guess," "maybe," "sort of" indicate the speaker lacks authority or conviction. Qualifiers also lessen the unkindness of a statement because of their tentativeness.

2. Tag questions: Phrases which turn a declarative statement into a question by tagging a question onto the end of a statement. Example: "That was an interesting lecture, don't you think?" Tags may be used when a speaker does not have full confidence in his/her statement. Tags can also be used to elicit a response from the other person.

3. Compound requests: Rather than making a simple request, the speaker softens the request with extra wording. For instance, "Drop that by my office," might become "You could drop that by my office, if you'd like." The wordier compound request softens the brusqueness of the former statement and appears more polite.

4. Polite forms: Polite forms indicate a deference to or consideration of the other person. Examples: "Thank you for your time." "Please call me later in the day."

5. Disclaimers: Express uncertainty. Eakins & Eakins (1978, p. 45) define disclaimers as "introductory expressions that excuse, explain, or request understanding or forbearance." Examples: "This may sound odd, but . . .," or "I could be wrong, but . . ."

6. Intensifiers: Increase or emphasize the force of a statement. Examples: "really," "very," "surely," "such."

7. Verbal fillers: Words or phrases that we use to fill in silences. Examples: "well," "okay," "you know."

A powerful speech style was characterized by the absence of the message elements identified for the powerless speech. As a result, all statements in a powerful speech style were devoid of qualifiers, tag questions, compound requests, intensifiers, polite forms, disclaimers, and verbal fillers.

A mixed speech style was characterized by the presence of the message elements for the powerless speech style in part of the speaker's statements. The remaining statements made by the speaker included no powerless speech elements and, thus, were characterized as powerful. The rationale for operationalizing mixed speech style in the manner described was to blend

characteristics of both the powerful and powerless speech styles. Since a mixed speech style has not been researched, it has not been operationalized previously.

Manager-Subordinate Communication Episode

A script was created which depicted a manager talking on the phone to a subordinate who has called with a work problem. The script contained only the manager's portion of the conversation so that respondents would focus solely on the manager's speech style. The script was devised such that the nature of the conversation was revealed by hearing only the manager's part of the dialogue.

In order to compare the effects of the three speech styles, this basic script was then modified by adding or deleting the speech elements characteristic of each style. The resulting three versions of the script were: (1) powerful, (2) powerless, (3) mixed speech styles. The message for each script was approximately one minute in length depending upon the version presented.

Two experienced actors were hired to enact the role of manager in the script. Both the male and female actors were videotaped encoding all three speech style scripts. The setting was constant for the actors for the three script versions. Both actors depicted the realistic age and appearance of a manager of blue-collar workers. Each was filmed seated behind a desk so that the body was visible only from the waist up.

Manipulation Check

In order to determine if naive subjects could distinguish

among the three speech styles, a paired comparison scaled analysis was conducted. Fifty-five volunteers from four sections of basic public speaking courses at a major Northeastern university rated the possible pairs of gender/style combinations.

Analysis of the data from the preliminary paired comparison scaling study revealed that naive subjects could distinguish among the three speech styles. For both the male and female manager the powerful style was rated most powerful/aggressive followed by the mixed style. The powerless style was rated least powerful/aggressive.

Preparation of Presentational Modes

Three presentational modes were prepared. For the transcribed format typed transcripts of the three speech style script versions were produced for respondents to read and rate. In order to reveal manager's gender to respondents, one set of the speech styles scripts contained introductory information identifying the manager as Patricia Lapworth; the other set of scripts identified the manager as Patrick Lapworth.

The videotapes produced using the actor or actress were used for the videotaped format. Respondents would view then rate either the male or female manager using the three speech styles.

The audiotaped format was produced by transferring the audio portion of the videotape onto an audiotape. Respondents would hear then rate either the male or female manager using the three styles.

Measures

Respondents were asked to evaluate each speech style on a 5-point Likert-type scale for seven questions. Questions were based on Bartol and Butterfield's (1976) study which evaluated effectiveness of leadership styles. Wording was modified to reflect the differing management scenario used in the current study. Scores for the seven questions constituted the dependent variable. The questions asked were:

1. All in all, how effective do you think this manager's behavior is?
2. How effective do you think this manager would be in influencing upper management?
3. How satisfied would you be working for this manager?
4. How productive do you think employees would be working for this manager?
5. How satisfied do you think employees would be working for this manager?
6. How do you think this manager's boss would evaluate this behavior?
7. Based on the phone conversation, how much do you like this style?

Procedures

Students from thirteen sections of basic speech courses were presented with either the male or female version of the speech styles on one of the three delivery modes. The gender version and presentational modes for the speech styles stimulus message were randomly assigned to class sections. Students were told they were participating in a study investigating managers' communication styles. They were asked to

rate the effectiveness of each style by answering the seven questions for each style on their answer sheet.

Design and Analysis

The variables of primary interest in this study were speech style (powerful, powerless, or mixed); presentational mode (transcribed, audiotaped, or videotaped); and speaker (manager's) sex. An additional analysis introducing respondent sex was conducted to determine its effect. This describes a 2 X 2 X 3 X 3 factorial design.

MANOVAs were conducted examining the effects of the independent variables on the manager effectiveness scores. When significant main effects or interactions were obtained, post hoc Tukey's were utilized to examine differences among groups. The General Linear Model (GLM) procedure was used as it is appropriate for an unbalanced design. The 0.05 level was set for all comparisons.

In-score reliability coefficients obtained for the effectiveness measures indicated a high degree of stability (alpha = .854).

RESULTS

The MANOVA analyses yielded significant main effects for speech style (F= 239.37, df= 2/586. p= .0001) and presentational mode (F= 5.62, df= 2/586. p= .004). The mixed speech style (M= 27.10) was rated significantly more effective than the powerless speech style (M= 24.11) which, in turn, was rated significantly more effective than the powerful speech style (M= 15.60). The speech styles on the audiotaped presentation (M= 22.99) were rated highest followed by the videotaped version (M= 22.13). The transcribed version (M= 21.34) received the lowest ratings. The difference between the mean scores for the audiotaped and transcribed versions was significant.

No significant main effect occurred for sex of manager (F= 0.08, df=1/586. p= 0.77). Effectiveness score means for the male manager (M= 22.21) were similar to effectiveness scores for the female manager (M= 22.29). However, there was a signficant main effect for respondent sex (F= 10.63, df=1/586. p= .001). Ratings made by male respondents (M= 23.12) were significantly higher than ratings made by female respondents (M= 21.64). A significant interaction was observed for respondent sex, manager sex, presentational mode, and speech style (F= 1.50, df=29/586. p= .05).

To investigate the interaction MANOVA analyses were conducted for each of the three speech styles of the power variable. For the powerful speech style there was no significant main effect for manager's sex (F= 0.19, df= 1/196. p= 0.665) nor for presentational mode (F=2.03, df=2/196. p= 0.135). No

interaction occurred for manager's sex and mode (f= 1.07, df=2/196. p= .344).

However, for the powerless style there was a significant main effect for presentational mode (F= 3.35, df=2/195. p= 0.037). Post hoc Tukeys revealed manager's effectiveness scores were highest for the audio taped mode (M=25.47) followed by the scores for the transcribed mode (M=23.86). Effectiveness scores for the videotaped mode (M=22.57) were lowest with a significant difference between scores for the videotaped and audiotaped modes.

No main effect for manager's sex was observed for the powerless speech style (F= 2.30, df=1/195. p= 0.131) nor was there an interaction for manager's sex and presentational mode (F= 2.22, df=2/195. p= .111).

For the mixed speech style, again, no main effect for sex of manager occurred (F= 2.49, df=1/193. p= .116). However, a significant main effect was observed for presentational mode (F= 5.04, df=2/193. p= .007). A follow-up Tukey's test revealed the effectiveness scores for the videotaped format (M= 28.32) were highest followed by the audiotaped format (M= 27.32). Scores for the transcribed format (M= 25.54) were lowest with a significant difference between scores for the transcribed and videotaped formats.

No significant interaction for manager's sex and presentational mode was observed (F= .25, df=2/193, p= .778).

TABLE 1

Mean Effectiveness Scores for the Male and Female Manager for Speech Style on Presentational Modes

	Transcribed Presentation	Audiotaped Presentation	Videotaped Presentation
	Male Manager	Male Manager	Male Manager
Powerful Style	14.85 (26)	16.22 (51)	14.86 (35)
	Female Manager	Female Manager	Female Manager
	14.42 (31)	16.25 (28)	16.88 (26)
	Male Manager	Male Manager	Male Manager
Powerless Style	22.92 (26)	26.22 (51)	23.82 (34)
	Female Manager	Female Manager	Female Manager
	24.65 (31)	24.11 (28)	20.92 (26)
	Male Manager	Male Manager	Male Manager
Mixed Style	24.77 (26)	27.02 (50)	27.39 (33)
	Female Manager	Female Manager	Female Manager
	26.19 (31)	27.86 (28)	29.50 (26)

Note: Higher values indicate greater effectiveness. Cell frequencies are given in parentheses.

To further investigate the four-way interaction, MANOVA analyses were conducted for each of the presentational formats of the mode variable. For the transcribed mode there was no main effect for manager's sex ($F=1.02$, $df=1/170$, $p=0.313$). However, a main effect was observed for speech style ($F=57.90$, $df=2/170$, $p=.0001$). No significant interaction for manager's sex and speech style occurred ($F=.56$, $df=2/170$, $p=.571$).

For the audiotaped presentational mode no sex of manager main effect was significant ($F=.27$, $df=1/235$, $p=.604$), but a speech style main effect was significant ($F=92.40$, $df=2/235$, $p=.0001$). No reliable interaction for manager's sex and speech style was observed ($F=1.39$, $df=2/235$, $p=.251$).

For the videotaped presentational mode there was no main effect for sex of manager ($F=.50$, $df=1/179$, $p=.482$), however, a main effect for speech style was significant ($F=94.00$, $df=2/179$, $p=.0001$). Additionally, an interaction for manager's sex and speech style was observed ($F=4.77$, $df=2/179$, $p=.010$).

Follow-up analyses on significant main effects using Tukey's Studentized Range (HSD) test revealed that the main effects for speech style were in the direction of the previous analyses. The mixed speech style was judged significantly more effective than the powerless speech style, which, in turn, was judged significantly more effective than the powerful speech style.

Follow-up analysis examining the interaction of manager's sex and speech style for the videotaped presentational mode were conducted. The Newman-Keuls' multiple range test was utilized to compare groups. No significant differences for mean effectiveness scores were observed for the male and female

manager for the powerful or mixed speech styles. However, for the powerless speech style a significant difference was observed for the male and female manager effectiveness scores. The male manager using the powerless style was rated significantly higher than the female manager using the powerless style.

DISCUSSION

Effects of speech style were consistent across all modes of presentation. This finding corroborates Erickson and her associates' (1978) research which found effects of speech style are not restricted to one mode of presentation. For all modes in the present study, respondents rated the mixed speech style most effective. Whereas, the powerless speech style was judged next most effective, while the powerful speech style was rated least effective.

Apparently, the speech styles were sufficiently different so that, regardless of the presentational mode, respondents were consistent in their ratings. The addition of the videotaped presentational format did not effect judgements of speech style.

The most significant finding, however, is that the hybrid mixed style, heretofore unresearched, was judged most effective. That the mixed style was rated most effective may be explained by the fact that both the powerful and powerless speech styles have useful qualities. Combining these two styles may draw on the benefits of each. The directness and certainty characteristic of the powerful speech style coupled with the tentativeness and responsiveness of the powerless style may

produce an image of a manager who is competent yet concerned and open.

The powerless speech style was perceived as more effective than the powerful speech style for the managers. This finding suggests that respondents judge the tentative and responsive approach of the powerless style as more appropriate than the directive approach of the powerful speech style for this communication setting.

These findings are consistent with Bradac and Mulac's (1984) contention that aspects of the powerless speech style may be judged as an appropriate tactic depending on the communicator's intention. In the communication context presented in this study, the manager was engaged in problem-solving with the employee.

Effectiveness scores for the male and female manager did not vary significantly for speech style or for presentational mode. Respondents did not favor one gender over the other in any of the presentational modes nor did they judge any of the speech styles as being more appropriate for one gender. These findings suggest gender was not an issue for the sample in this study. Results are consistent with the Erickson et al. (1978) study which found effects of speech style were not restricted to one gender of speaker.

There was no interaction between manager's sex and presentational mode. However, when the speech style variable was introduced, it produced a three-way interaction. Investigation of the three-way interaction revealed no significant interaction between manager's sex and speech style for the transcribed or audiotaped presentation modes. However, for the videotaped mode

manager's sex and speech style interacted. Closer examination of the interaction revealed that the interaction occurred for the powerless speech style for the videotaped presentation. Here, the male manager was judged significantly more effective than the female manager. This relationship of powerless speech style, sex of speaker, and presentational mode is consistent with Erickson and her associates (1978) study. In their study they found a relationship between speech style, sex of speaker, and presentational mode for the powerless style but not for the powerful style.

It is important to note that any main effects or interactions involving manager gender for the videotaped presentation must be viewed with caution. Since only one female and one male actor were used, responses may have been caused by actors' individual differences rather than by gender.

With this caveat in mind, nonetheless, a possible explanation will be offered for the effects produced. Possibly due to the salience of the gender and speech style cues on the videotaped format, it was more susceptible to stringent rating. This may be particularly true for the powerless style because of its more cumbersome nature.

For the male manager using the powerless style, perhaps the tentative nature of the powerless style coupled with the antecedent competence generally ascribed to males produced an image of a competent yet open manager. Whereas, for the female manager using the powerless style, the tentativeness of the powerless style paired with the uncertainty of competence

stereotypically ascribed to females produced an image of an open but not necessarily competent manager.

Although effects of speech style were consistent across all modes, a main effect for mode indicated a significant difference in effectiveness scores for the three modes. Overall scores for the audiotaped presentation format were highest and for the transcribed format the lowest. MANOVA analysis of the speech styles variable revealed main effects for presentational mode for the powerless and mixed speech styles but not for the powerful speech style. The powerful speech style scores did not differ significantly across presentational modes. However, for the powerless speech style, the audiotaped presentation mode produced the highest scores, while the videotaped format produced the lowest scores. In contrast, for the mixed speech style the scores for the videotaped format were highest, while scores for transcribed format were lowest.

Although these results seem spurious, a possible explanation will be offered. Perhaps the reason there were no significant mode differences for the scores on the powerful speech style is due to its succinct and fluent manner. The powerful style, because of its straight forward communication of information, may be less susceptible to differing evaluations due to presentational mode. Whereas, the more cumbersome and complex mixed and powerless speech styles are more susceptible to variations in rating due to presentational mode. The videotaped presentational mode was most susceptible to fluctuating evaluations. As mentioned earlier, possibly because of the salience of gender and speech style cues, the styles on the videotaped format were

judged more stringently. It is also possible that respondents evaluations were influenced by actors' individual differences or presentation for the speech style versions.

Analysis of overall speech style effectiveness scores revealed the scores for the audiotaped presentation were highest and for the transcribed presentation the lowest. One explanation for the low scores on the transcribed mode may be that raters are more critical of the written presentation. This finding concurs with Bradac, Konsky, and Davies (1976) research which found raters were more critical of the written presentation than of the audiotaped presentation. Because there are fewer information cues regarding the speaker in the written presentation, perhaps respondents judge the speech style without regard for the speaker. Whereas, the more information respondents have regarding the speaker, the more likely ratings will be based on these other factors interacting with speech style. This may account for the spurious ratings for the videotaped presentations.

Finally, ratings made by male respondents were significantly higher than ratings made by female respondents. This finding corroborates Bradac & Milac (1984) and Wiley & Eskilson's (1985) research which indicated female respondents are more sensitive to variations in speech style.

In conclusion, these findings suggest the addition of the videotaped presentational format did not effect speech style ratings. Implications for future research are that any of the three presentional modes possesses sufficient power to measure speech style effects. However, although the powerful speech

style ratings were not effected by presentation mode, the powerless and mixed speech style ratings were more susceptible to variations due to presentational mode. Therefore in examining the effects of powerless or mixed speech styles for male and female speakers, future researchers should be aware of the effects of presentation mode used. Whether presentational mode is merely a confounding variable or a variable of theoretical interest was not established in this study. Additional research may provide answers.

Whereas previous research has been limited to comparing the effects of the powerful and powerless speech styles, this study included a mixed speech style. The mixed speech style deserves future research attention, especially since the current study found respondents favored this style over the other two speech styles.

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